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Monessen Featured in National Promotional Video

MONESSEN – The City of Monessen was featured in a mini-documentary video entitled, “Small Town Spirit: Monessen, Pennsylvania”. The 11-minute video, primarily narrated by Mayor Matt Shorraw, showcases the City’s industrial history, and its current state. Monessen, which was a political and industrial powerhouse for much of the 20th century, has been left picking up the pieces of its city, since the fall of the steel industry in 1986. In the video, Mayor Shorraw says, “The mill was the thing that everyone was a part of. You worked there, in one way or another, or your father or brother worked there. And it was the thing that kind of brought everyone together, and we don’t really have anything that does that now in Monessen.”

The video shows glimmers of hope and change, as new people have recently begun buying and rehabilitating old properties; all while at the same time, the City Government recently began taking serious steps in rebranding the city, and rebuilding its code enforcement department, with a new code officer, and stricter property maintenance rules, in an effort to clean up properties, and attract new people to move in, open businesses, and rehabilitate properties.

The video was produced by First and Main Films and was presented by Proud Places, which is a network of professionals focused on improving places, by focusing on people and places, and making small, tangible improvements to make peoples’ lives better. The film was produced at no cost to the City.

Mayor Shorraw said that the film came about when a producer at First and Main heard his podcast interview through Proud Places, where he spoke about the City’s new direction with code enforcement, tackling blight, and updating outdated ordinances.

In the video, Mayor Shorraw cites decades of decline that contributed to Monessen’s current state but he believes that Monessen will rise again. “I like to think that Monessen itself could be the thing that brings everyone together. I think there are enough people in the city that love the city and that want to see it get better, and that that could be the thing that brings everyone together.”, Shorraw said.

Shorraw concludes the video by adding, “What is Monessen? Monessen is resilient. We’re aspiring to be something better than what we are now. What is Monessen? We are literally a city on a hill. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Monessen hopes that this video will inspire people to take a different look at their city – not as a former industrial hub and ‘ghost town’, but as a city that has opportunities, and one that should be optimistic in its future.

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